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(19)  **Europäisches Patentamt**
European Patent Office
Office européen des brevets



(11) **EP 1 011 278 A2**

(12) **EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION**

- (43) Date of publication: **21.06.2000** *Bulletin* 2000/25 (51) Int. Cl.⁷: **H04Q 7/22**, H04M 7/00
- (21) Application number: **99125265.1**
- (22) Date of filing: **17.12.1999**

(84) Designated Contracting States:
AT BE CH CY DE DK ES FI FR GB GRIE IT LI LU
MC NL PT SE
 Designated Extension States:
AL LT LV MK RO SI

(30) Priority: **17.12.1998 US 213958**

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(54) **Apparatus for interfacing a wireless local network and a wired voice telecommunications system**

(57) An apparatus for interfacing a wireless local area network with a wide area, cellular or public switched telephone network including the function of a wireless LAN base station or access point, and a gateway. The interface may contain one or more different types of gateways, including a PSTN voice gateway, an analog modem gateway, and others. The apparatus may also include a well designed to receive the handset or mobile computer device to recharge the battery as well as to automatically transfer data when the phone or device is secured in the well.

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1. Field of the invention

[0001] The present invention relates to the field of communications over different types of communications networks. More specifically, the present invention relates to an apparatus which interfaces a wireless IP network and a wide area network or public switched telephone network (PSTN) for voice communications.

2. The Background Art

0002) Public switched telephone networks have been used for many years for voice communication. The typical telephone converts sound waves into analog signals, which are then transmitted through the public network, switched at intervals to another telephone, and converted the analog audio signals back into sound waves. In recent years, wireless and cellular technologies have been rising in popularity, due to their mobility. Users are no longer tied to a stationary telephone, but are free to carry their computers with them.

0003) With the advent of computers and fax machines, there arose a need to transmit data in a similar fashion. Due to the fact that analog telephone lines were already in existence in every part of the nation, specific protocols were designed, such as the V.23 protocol, which specified how digital data is encoded into analog signals for transmission over public switched telephone networks.

0004) The apparatus that performs conversion from digital data to an analog telephone signal is known as an analog modem. Analog modems do not require dedicated or specialized lines, as they use pre-existing telephone lines, which are already in operation in nearly every home in the country. The main drawback, however, is the relatively low speed of transmissions. Current protocols allow only up to about 56 kbps to be transmitted through an analog phone line, and FCC regulations currently limit this number to 53 kbps due to power output concerns.

0005) Users who require faster transmission speeds have turned to carriers which allow digital transmissions, which not only provide much faster speeds and higher bandwidth, but also reduce errors that occur during transmissions. Examples of such carriers are ISDN lines, T1 and T3 lines, and cable lines. ISDN lines are actually twisted pair telephone lines, while ISDN services allow a user to define digital transmission without a dedicated or specialized line; the inherent physical characteristics of twisted pairs limits the amount of bandwidth and speed of such systems. T1 and T3 lines are specialized, dedicated lines (T1 lines can carry up to 1.544 Mbps while T3 lines can carry up to 44.7 Mbps). Wireless infrared and radio frequency (RF) protocols are known which support the logical interconnection of access points, one or more host computer network systems.

0006) Wireless local area networks (WLANs) are used in business applications such as inventory, price verification, mark-down, portable point of sale, order entry, shipping, receiving and package tracking. Wireless local area networks use infrared or radio frequency communications channels to communicate between portable or mobile computer units and stationery computers or base stations. These access points are in turn connected by a wired or wireless communication channel to a network infrastructure which connects groups of access points together to form a local area network, including, optionally, one or more host computer systems.

0007) Wireless infrared and radio frequency (RF) protocols are known which support the logical interconnection of access points, one or more host computer network systems.

nection of portable roaming terminals having a variety of types of communication capabilities to host computers. The logical interconnections are based upon an infrastructure in which at least some each of the remote terminals are capable of communicating with at least two of the access points when located within a predetermined range therefrom, each terminal unit being normally associated with and in communication with a single one of such access points. Based on the overall spatial layout, response time, and loading requirements of the network, different networking schemes and communication protocols have been designed so as to most efficiently regulate the association of the mobile unit with specific access points, and the availability of the communication channel to individual mobile units for broadcasting.

[0011] One such protocol is described in U.S. Patent Nos. 5,029,183; 5,142,550; 5,280,498; and 5,668,803 each assigned to Symbol Technologies, Inc. and incorporated herein by reference.

[0012] Another such protocol is described in U.S. Patent 5,673,031. Still another protocol is set forth in the IEEE Standard 802.11 entitled "Wireless LAN Medium Access Control (MAC) and Physical Layer (PHY) Specifications" available from the IEEE Standards Department, Piscataway, NJ (hereinafter the "IEEE 802.11 Standard").

[0013] The IEEE 802.11 Standard permits either infrared or RF communications, at 1 Mbps and 2Mbps data rates, a medium access technique similar to carrier sense multiple access/collision avoidance (CSMA/CA), a power-save mode particularly important for battery-operated mobile units, seamless roaming in a full cellular network, high throughput operation, diverse antenna systems designed to eliminate "dead spots", and an easy interface to existing network infrastructures.

[0014] The basic specifications for the communications of audio, video and multimedia that are applicable to the networks pertaining to the present invention are set forth in the International Telecommunications Union Telecommunication Standards Sect (ITU-T) standards H.320-323.

[0015] The H.321 recommendation relates to asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) channels, H.322 to guaranteed Quality of Service LANs, and H.323 to packet based systems. Data packets are created from a compressed data stream of digital voice samples. The data packets are formatted for transmission over a data network. Since network latency and packet transmission delays can be disastrous to the intelligibility and quality of real-time phone conversations, a variety of approaches of giving priority to voice packets (or other real-time multimedia packets) over data packets in the network have been proposed, thus allowing delay-sensitive packets to supercede data packets across any network node in any traffic situation. The H.323 recommendation also provides for call establishment and control, including determining the sequencing and timing of

establishing and disconnect procedures, as well as the control of the H.323 session after it is established.

[0016] To the extent the Internet Protocol or "IP" (as set forth in IETF RFC 791) is used as the network layer protocol, the recommendations of the International Multimedia Teleconferencing Consortium's Voice over IP Forum are also applicable to such a Voice over IP ("VoIP") network. In a VoIP network, the voice signal is digitized, encapsulated into IP packets, and then routed between VoIP capable devices in an IP network. These packets of voice may then be delivered in real time as voice communications, or stored as voice mail.

[0017] Communications between a LAN and a wide area network or public switched telephone network are generally performed by communications controller known as a gateway. In the H.323 standard, a gateway generally refers to an endpoint which provides for real-time, two-way communications between H.323 terminals on an IP network and other ITU terminals, telephones on a PSTN, and terminals on other networks. An example of a gateway is the Cisco 3600 series of Cisco Systems, Inc. The Cisco 3600 series is a modular gateway that can be configured to provide gateway functions over a wide variety of communications mediums. These include, among others, analog modem access, ISDN access, digital modem access, and voice and fax access. Other types of interfaces between wired LANs and connected or switched networks such as frame relay and ATM networks are known. For example, the ATM Forum has developed a bridging implementation agreement called LAN Emulation (LANE). LANE relies on a LAN Emulation Server (LES), which performs MAC-to-ATM address resolution; a Broadcast and Unknown Server (BUS), which performs data broadcast; and an optional LAN Emulation Configuration Server (LECS), which performs initialization and configuration.

[0018] Prior to the present invention, there has not been a simple and user-transparent way to interface a wireless LAN with the diverse range of currently available public and private networks, including the public switched telephone network (PSTN), cable networks, wide area networks (WAN), cellular telephone networks, and satellite communications networks.

REFERENCES

[0019]

ITU-T Recommendation G.711 (1993) "Pulse Code Modulation (PCM) OF Voice Frequencies"

ITU-T Recommendation G.729 (1995) "Coding of Speech At 8 kbit/s Using Conjugate-Structure Algebraic-Code-Excited Linear-Prediction (CS-ACELP)"

ITU-T Recommendation H.323 (May, 1996): "Local Telephone Systems and Equipment for Visual Area

Networks Which Provide a Non-Guaranteed Quality of Service.

ITU-T Recommendation Q.931 (1993): "Digital Subscriber Signaling System No. 1 (DSS 1) - ISDN Basic Call Control

IEF RFC 791 "Internet Protocol". J. Foster, Sep-01-1981

IEF RFC 793 "Transmission Control Protocol". J. Foster, Sept-01-1981

Patent, Sept-01-1981

BRIDGE DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

1. Objects of the Invention

[0028] The present invention provides data communications network including a plurality of stationary access points and a plurality of remote mobile units, the mobile units being capable of wirelessly communicating with at least two of the access points when located within a predetermined range therefrom and being normally associated with and in communications with a single one of such access points. A processor is located at one of the access points for detecting a message sent by a first mobile unit and determining from the message whether it is to be routed to another mobile unit or over another channel to another type of communication station; and a gateway is connected to the access point and functions to provide a two-way voice channel of communications between the first mobile unit and another communication station.

[0029] The present invention further provides an integral apparatus combining the functions of an access point and a gateway for interfacing a wireless local area network with a wide area network or the public switched telephone network. The apparatus may contain one or more gateways, including a PSTN voice gateway (including XDSL or ISDN interfaces), an analog modem gateway, and others such as a cable modem for connection to a cable network. The apparatus may also include an Ethernet port or serial port for connection to a wide local area network. The apparatus may also include a docking station or well designed to receive the handset or other portable computer device to recharge the battery of the handset or optionally transfer data or control information when the phone or device is secured in the well.

[0030] The present invention provides an end-to-end method for handling an outgoing call from a caller using a handset in a wireless local area network, through other communications networks to the called party, including the steps of

detecting when the user activates the mobile handset to make an outgoing call;

receiving in the mobile handset the identification of the destination of the outgoing call from the user;

transmitting a ring signal to a network station corresponding to said destination, said ring signal designed to alert the recipient that a call is attempting to connect; and

transmitting an acknowledgment signal to the user is attempting to connect. The present invention

provides a method which can be used to accomplish one or more of the above objectives.

[0027] Additional objects, advantages and novel features of the present invention will become apparent from the following detailed description, including drawings, in the art having access to the teachings herein will recognize additional applications, modifications and embodiments in other fields, which are within the scope of the invention as disclosed and claimed herein and with respect to which the invention could be of significant utility.

2. Features of the Invention.

[0028] The present invention provides data communications network including a plurality of stationary access points and a plurality of remote mobile units, the mobile units being capable of wirelessly communicating with at least two of the access points when located within a predetermined range therefrom and being normally associated with and in communications with a single one of such access points. A processor is located at one of the access points for detecting a message sent by a first mobile unit and determining from the message whether it is to be routed to another mobile unit or over another channel to another type of communication station; and a gateway is connected to the access point and functions to provide a two-way voice channel of communications between the first mobile unit and another communication station.

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tion further includes the steps of receiving in the handset an indication from the user of the type of call the user desires to make, and determining in the handset whether the user is making a network address call, an intercom call, or a name call.

[0031] The present invention further provides a method of operating a data communications network including a plurality of sets of stationary access points and a gateway connected to the access points, and a plurality of remote mobile units, the mobile units being capable of wirelessly communicating with at least two of the access points when located within a predetermined range therefrom. Each mobile unit is normally associated with and in communications with a single one of such access points, and has a single network address that is selectable from a set of network addresses that is utilized by the mobile unit only while such mobile unit is active.

[0032] The method includes the steps of storing a set of network addresses available for use by users in a server computer on the network; transmitting a network address request to the server computer from a first mobile unit; and assigning a network address from the set of network addresses available to said first mobile unit. The method further includes providing identification information of the user from said first mobile unit to an authentication server; validating the user privileges by the authentication server and communicating such validation to said first mobile unit; and transmitting the network address associated with the user's mobile unit to the telephony gateway.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

[0033]

FIG. 1 is a diagram illustrating a wireless local area network in which the present invention may be implemented.

FIG. 2 is a timing diagram showing RF transmission versus time for a data transmission sequence.

FIG. 3 is a block diagram illustrating an apparatus for interfacing a wireless local area network and a wide area network or public switched telephone network in accordance with a first embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 4 is a block diagram illustrating a wireless desk phone in accordance with a second embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 5 is a block diagram of the protocol stacks that may be implemented in the wireless LAN in accordance with the invention.

FIG. 6 is a flow diagram illustrating a method for handling an outgoing call in a wireless IP phone system according to the present invention.

FIG. 7 is a flow diagram illustrating a method for handling an incoming call in a wireless IP phone system according to the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0034] Referring now to the figures, FIG. 1 shows a data communications network in which the embodiments of the present invention may be implemented. A first local area network 100 is illustrated, including a host processor 10 is connected by a wired communications link 11 to a number of stationary access points or base stations 12, 13; other base stations 14 can be coupled to the host through the base stations or by an RF link. Each one of the base stations 12, 13, 14 is coupled by an RF link to a number of remote mobile units 15. In one embodiment, the remote mobile units 15 are hand-held, battery-operated data terminals portable digital assistants or voice communication handsets such as described in U.S. Patent Nos. 5,029,183; Serial Nos. 08/794,782 filed February 3, 1997, and 09/008,710, filed January 16, 1998, all assigned to Symbol Technologies, Inc., and incorporated herein by reference.

[0035] Various other types of remote terminals may be advantageously employed in a system having features of the invention; these remote terminals ordinarily would include data entry facilities such as a magnetic card reader or the like, as well as a display (or printer) for indicating or providing to a user information detected, transmitted and/or received by the terminal. In this embodiment used as an illustrative example, there may be from one up to sixty-four of the base stations (three stations being shown in the Figure) and up to several hundred of the remote units; of course, the network may be expanded by merely changing the size of address fields and the like in the digital system, as will appear, but a limiting factor is the RF traffic and attendant delays in waiting for a quiet channel.

[0036] The first LAN 100 may be coupled to additional LANs 200, 300, 400 etc. through controllers such as bridges 50, 60, etc. or routers 55, 65, 75, 85, 95, 105, etc. This communications network as seen in Fig. 1 would ordinarily be used in a manufacturing facility, office building complex, warehouse, retail establishment, or like commercial facility or combination of these facilities, where the data-gathering terminals would be used for inventory control in stockroom or receiving/shipping facilities, at checkout (point of sale) counters, for reading forms or invoices of the like, for personnel security checking at gates or other checkpoints, at time clocks, for manufacturing or process flow control, and many other such uses.

[0037] Although hand-held, laser scanning bar-code reader data terminals are mentioned, the data ter-

voice and data transfer over the wireless link. Since IP is used as a network layer protocol, other than IP could be used as well.

[0040] The apparatus 50 contains one or more transmitter/receivers 52 for radio communications to the mobile units. The transmitter/receiver 52 is coupled to an access point Media Access Control (MAC) processor 54, which functions to send and receive data frames in the appropriate format to and from the transmitter/receiver 52 at the appropriate times. The processor 54 is also coupled to a memory 58, which buffers data packets.

[0041] Although in the present preferred embodiment the MAC processor 54 utilizes an IEEE 802.11 data link protocol, other wireless LANs or WLANs and other types of media access control, including FDDMA, TDMA, CDMA, and combinations thereof are also within the scope of the present invention. Different MAC processors may be used to accommodate two or more different access techniques, including those of proposed MAC standards of Home RF, Bluetooth, and others.

[0042] The memory 58 may be coupled to a switch or processor and multiplexor/demultiplexor 60 which provides processing and switching functions to route the data packets between the MAC processor 54 and an appropriate gateway. The switch or multiplexor/demultiplexor 60 may be coupled to voice gateway 62, which utilizes a switch and codecs to translate the voice packets into analog and digital signals suitable for transmission over a public switching telephone network or PBX. The switch or multiplexor/demultiplexor 60 may also be coupled to a digital modem gateway 64, which translates the digital datagrams from the LAN into encoded analog signals suitable for transmission over a voice switched telephone network, such as signals complying with the V.90 transmission protocol.

[0043] A Voice Gateway 62 also permits audio feedback from a telephone network (e.g. a busy signal) to an IP phone user in a wireless LAN system. For example, a series of feedback audio tones may be provided by the telephone network, which are transmitted to the gateway, packetized, and transmitted over the wireless link to the mobile IP phone. At the IP phone, the data packets are then converted into an analog signal, thereby producing an audible copy of the series of feedback audio tones.

[0044] In addition to the voice gateway interfacing to a wireless telephone network, interfaces to wireless voice and data networks may also be implemented. There are also a wide variety of both analog and digital cellular radio systems which are in use around the world for telephony and data network applications. The digital ones include GSM, DCS 1800, IS 54 and others, to the extent there is available at the gateway a landline telecommunications system called party.

minims may also include bar-coded readers of the CCD or types of data gathering devices may be utilized as terminals or any combination of the foregoing. Other types of data gathering devices may be utilized as terminals and use the features of the invention, such as temperature, pressure, or other environmental measuring devices, infrared detectors, etc.

[0038] According to an important feature of one embodiment of the invention, an RF packet communications protocol is provided between the remote units and the base stations, and includes a transmit/receive exchange, related to hereinafter simply as an "exchange". This protocol is similar to collision-sense multiple access (CSMA) in that a unit first listens before transmitting, and does not transmit if the channel is not free. As seen in Fig. 2, this exchange always begins with a remote-to-base transmitted packet, representing an RF transmission from a remote unit to be received by the base stations within a range. The transmitted packet is followed after a fixed time interval by a base-to-remote unit of RF information transmitted by the base station servicing this particular remote unit. Each of these packets and is of a fixed thing, a transceiver in a remote unit begins an exchange at its own initiative by first listening for other traffic for a brief interval t_0 (typically 0.3 msec), and, if the RF channel is quiet, starting a transmission at a time of its own selection (asynchronous). This outgoing transmission packet lasts for a time t_1 as seen in the Figure, and in an example embodiment this period is 4.8 milliseconds. Then at a precise time delay t_2 after it started transmission (e.g., 5 msec after the beginning of t_1), the transceiver begins listening for the return packet from the base station. The transceiver begins in a very rigid time window t_3 of a few microseconds length, and if the packet has not started during this window then anything to follow is ignored. The packet is an acknowledgment signal, and also contains at least what data is included, if any, so a remote-to-base exchange, including acknowledgement, takes about 9.8 msec in the example.

[0039] FIG. 3 is a diagram illustrating a first embodiment of the invention showing an apparatus 50 which combines the function of a wireless communication system access point and a telephone gateway in a single unit in accordance with the present invention. In the discussion that follows, we will assume that the mobile unit 15 being utilized as a voice communication handset or wireless portable telephone, although other features such as keyboard data entry, magnetic card data entry, bar code reading data entry could be incorporated in such unit as well, and such unit utilized for simultaneous

the use of a cellular radio system may be unnecessary and redundant. However, if such landline system is unavailable or has its service impeded, the provision of a cellular radio system gateway is also within the scope of the present invention. Similarly, in certain remote areas it may also be desirable to provide a satellite radio system capability, such as connectivity to the Iridium phone network. Thus, the multiplexor/demultiplexor 60 may be coupled to any other appropriate type of gateway 66, such as for xDSL, ISDN, FDDI, cellular radio telephony (such as GSM), RAM, ARDIS, CDPD, or satellite radio networks.

[0045] The apparatus may also contain a cable modem interface for access to a high bandwidth cable network. A cable network is a network running on traditional coaxial cable (which in most places, was originally designed to carry cable television signals). A cable modem MAC chip 68 is coupled to the multiplexor/demultiplexor 60 and controls the access to the physical cable media (the actual transmissions traveling on the cable modem network) and forms the cable network data frame. There are many different cable modem standards and the apparatus may be designed to be compatible with any one of the standards. In the frequency-agile multimode (FAMM) standard (a modulation technique of the IEEE 802.14 standard), a preamble is inserted at the beginning of the data, with a long preamble used for channel probing and equalization, and a short preamble used for fast resynchronization. Azzam, A. High-Speed Cable Modems. N.Y., McGraw-Hill, 1997. p. 213-19. Data in the body of each frame is scrambled according to a pre-defined algorithm, and a cyclic redundancy check field is provided for error detection. The FAMM standard supports several different modulation options, but all are a type of trellis-coded modulation (TCM).

[0046] If the apparatus is designed for use with the FAMM standard, a transmission over the cable would proceed as follows. The MAC chip 68 would send the data to a scrambler and CRC generator 70, which scrambles the data and generates the error-correcting cyclical redundancy check field. Then it is sent to a TCM encoder 72, which encodes the data in trellis-coded modulation form. A control signal is sent to a preamble generator 74, which then generates an appropriate preamble for the data. The preamble and data are both sent through a filter 76, which would most likely be a digital pulse shaping filter, which is sampled at twice the modulation rate. This information is then passed to an equalizer 78 for equalization. The equalized information is sent through an interpolator 80 (e.g. an interpolation filter), which interpolates the information so that the input to the digital to analog (D/A) converters 82 is at a constant rate for different modulation options. After the D/A's 82, the information is passed through lowpass filters and IQ modulation 84, for the final stages of the transmission process. The information is then ready to be transmitted by a cable modem transmitter 86, which

sends the information over the cable utilizing control signals received from a transmission-reception control circuit 88.

[0047] Signals received from the cable are received by a cable modem receiver 90, which passes the information to a multiplexor/demultiplexor 92, which divides out the cable frequencies into channels. Each of these channels may carry independent information. Each channel of information is sent through at least one digital signal processor 94, which performs the appropriate receiver signal-processing functions and deliver the decoded information conveyed in the body of a frame to the MAC chip.

[0048] Since the cable modem standards generally allow for very large bandwidths, the number of possible independent channels is very high. This allows for more users and devices to be used simultaneously. For example, if the apparatus supported eight independent channels, it would be possible to have five independent mobile computer terminals accessing the cable network while at the same time conducting three independent voice conversations over the cable network.

[0049] Another feature of the present invention relates to providing recharging and downloading cradles for use with the wireless handset, mobile computer terminals or portable bar code readers, (including pen-like readers depicted in U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 08/794,782). The apparatus 50 may therefore optionally include a docking station or well 96 which can be used to store and recharge the wireless handset or mobile computer terminal when not in use. It is also possible to design the well 96 so that when the mobile unit 15 is placed in the well 96, the MAC processor downloads or retrieves data from the mobile computer terminal using an appropriate interface (electrical contact or IR) and either stores it, or sends it out over the WAN.

[0050] The automatic downloading of data is useful in applications such as a shopping at home through an catalog of a company. The user may have a small mobile computer terminal or portable digital assistant in which the user enters data of the items selected for purchase from the catalog. When the user decides on a product to buy, he must communicate that information from the mobile computer terminal to the retailer. In the past, the next step would be to connect the mobile computer terminal to a host computer, either directly or through a wireless network. The host computer then utilizes a modem or similar interface for communicating with a home office of the catalog retailer. Using the present invention, however, as an alternative to implementing a wireless LAN, the user may simply place the mobile computer terminal in the well 96 when he has finished using it. Using power 56, the well 96 acts to recharge the mobile computer terminal, while also automatically accessing information contained on the mobile computer terminal, including the retailer information and purchase information. The apparatus then automatically routes the data to the appropriate gateway, dials the

may be two network drivers designated as driver A, and driver B. These network drivers are invoked by the MPR to authenticate an provide access to the specific network services provided by the drivers. The input/output devices may contain two distinct physical network connections and data buffering or storage devices associated with each channel.

[0059] The use of two network connections illustrate that the embodiments of the present invention may be operative in an environment where the computer system is connected to one or more networks and that these networks may be heterogeneous. One skilled in the art will appreciate that the methods of the present invention may be practiced on processing systems with varying architectures, including multi-processor environments, and on systems with hard wired logic. Also, one skilled in the art will realize that the present invention can be implemented in a stand-alone environment where other types of drivers are used to support secure access to the communications services and channels that may be available.

[0060] Software systems often provide several application programming interfaces (hereinafter referred to as "APIs", or sets of routines) for carrying out the methods of the present invention. Typical components of the software architecture include application programs, a multiple provider router dynamic link library ("DLL"), and network drivers which reside in the memory of the computer system. The MPR code implements a set of network APIs, which are network independent and can be used by applications programs at higher levels on the protocol stack to communicate with the various network interfaces.

[0061] Special features can be implemented in the case where the wireless IP phone connects to a gateway to the PSTN. Most users are accustomed to features which are common in analog landline telephones. These features include several signaling aspects including a dial tone produced when a user first picks up a telephone handset, a busy signal produced if a dialed number is currently in use, a series of rings produced if a dialed number has not answered, etc. The features may also include redialing, speed dialing, conference calling, caller identification, etc. These features can be emulated in the apparatus when the LAN is a wireless IP phone system and are typically performed in software.

[0062] FIG. 6 is a flow diagram depicting a method for handling an outgoing call in a wireless IP phone system. At step 200, the system detects when the user activates the wireless IP phone, such as when the user has entered the destination and activates a function key labeled "send". This would be equivalent to what is generally known as "picking up" the telephone. In portable telephones, however, the user does not necessarily pick a telephone off of a base unit in order to activate the line, but may simply press a button labeled "call", "on", "talk", or something similar. The wireless IP phone then

sends a signal to the access point indicating that it has been activated for voice communications.

[0063] At step 202, the system sends an acknowledgement signal to the wireless station which produces a display signal indicating the station is on the network. However, the advantage of waiting for acknowledgement from the apparatus is that there may be some "line checking" functions to be performed so that the acknowledgement signal to the wireless IP phone will not be sent if there is a problem with the wireless channel. Potential problems include the wireless IP phone being outside the range of the transmitter/receiver, excessive loading or network traffic prohibiting voice communications, or other difficulties that would result in a quality of service below a predetermined threshold. If the IP phone cannot associate with an access point, or loses such association, it displays "No Network" in the display. In addition, when the phone is idle, and the wireless link is being impeded, the IP phone may sound the out-of-range tone (one long beep and two short beeps). When the IP phone is active, and the connection is being impeded it sounds the call-waiting tone (two short beeps) to the user. The user has ten seconds to move within range of an access point on the network before the IP phone automatically disconnects the call.

[0064] Once a "welcome" and positive status indication is produced, the user may begin dialing a number. Therefore, at step 204, the system will detect when numbers are dialed, and at step 206, the system will store these numbers in memory.

[0065] At step 208, assuming a voice gateway connection, the gateway sends a "ring" message to the phone number being called. A "ring" message indicates to the caller that it should produce a series of rings in the earpiece indicating that a caller is attempting to contact it. How this "ring" message is configured and signaled is largely dependent on the type of wide area or switched telephone phone network to which the apparatus is connected. If the apparatus is connected to a cable modem network, then the "ring" message would be encapsulated in a cable modem protocol packet.

[0066] The cable modem protocol can briefly be described here. In the FMM standard, upstream frames begin with a preamble and end with a tail sequence. The preamble may be one of two sequences. The first is a long preamble used for channel probing and equalization. This preamble sequence begins with a tone. After a period T, the phase of the tone is reversed. In the receiver, the phase reversal may be detected even when there is strong distortion that is encountered without equalization. The phase reversal acts as a time marker, indicating the beginning of a subsequently transmitted sequence of equalizer training symbols. The second possible sequence is a short preamble used for fast resynchronization. This is a short sequence of modulation symbols chosen such that a receiver may establish the timing phase and carrier phase with suitable processing methods.

[0067] The frame body contains protocol data and user data. This data is scrambled. It is then followed by

error correction. A tail section then follows if tails coded with a cyclic redundancy check (CRC) field, which is used to code modulation (TCM) is used, so that it may reach a known code state before the end of the signal transmission. In the FAMM standard, data rates between 0.5 Mbit/s and 16Mbit/s are supported. One of ordinary skill in the art

will realize, however, that there are other types of cable modern standards which may be utilized as well.

sends a signal to the wirelesss IP phone until the call is connected to produce a "ring" sound in the earpiece of the destination handset. The ring sound will most likely emulate the commonly known "ring" sound of landline telephones systems (in brief, length and time between rings). The ringing continues until the call is connected, or until the user decides to decline the call by depressing the "End" key.

following authentication of the identity of the user, and authorization only for the class of service assigned to

important in wireless network environments to control

specified user, and transmit the messages using the network address to the user over the Ethernet to the appropriate access point, or by RF broadcast from the corresponding access point.

[0076] The process of assigning a network address to a wireless handset may be performed by a domain name server (DNS) or a dynamic host configuration protocol (DHCP) server connected to the network. Such services provide domain name to network address translation and temporary assignment of an network address to the mobile unit. Alternatively, the set of available network addresses may be stored internally in a memory in the handset itself, and a specific network address released to the user that is associated with the user's identification.

[0077] Another feature of the present invention may be to automatically to provide a set of parameter settings, or "class of service" options, associated with a particular user upon the wireless handset being authorized and registered. For example, a particular user may have a list of speed dial numbers, ringing options, of other personal options or features that the user would like implemented whenever a handset is activated by that user. These parameters settings may be stored along with the PIN number or other authorization data. Once the handset is authorized, the parameter settings are released from internal memory, or automatically downloaded directly to the handset in use, and the operational parameters of the handset are adjusted to such settings.

[0078] While embodiments and applications of this invention have been shown and described, it would be apparent to those skilled in the art that many more modifications than mentioned above are possible without departing from the inventive concepts herein. The invention, therefore, is not to be restricted except in the spirit of the appended claims.

[0079] According to its broadest aspect the invention relates to a data communications network including a plurality of stationary access points and a plurality of remote mobile units, the mobile units being capable of wirelessly communicating with at least two of the access points when located within a predetermined range therefrom and being normally associated with and in communications with a single one of such access points, a mobile unit having a single network address that is selectable from a set of network addresses and is utilized by the mobile unit only while such mobile unit is active.

[0080] It should be noted that the objects and advantages of the invention may be attained by means of any compatible combination(s) particularly pointed out in the items of the following summary of the invention.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0081]

1. A data communications network including a plurality of stationary access points and a plurality of remote mobile units, the mobile units being capable of wirelessly communicating with at least two of the access points when located within a predetermined range therefrom and being normally associated with and in communications with a single one of such access points, a mobile unit having a single network address that is selectable from a set of network addresses and is utilized by the mobile unit only while such mobile unit is active, comprising:

a processor located at one of said access points for detecting a message sent by a first mobile unit and determining from the message whether it is to be routed to another mobile unit or to another communication station; and

a gateway connected to said access points and functioning to provide a two-way voice channel of communications between the first mobile unit and said another communication station.

2. A network wherein said message includes the addressing mode selected by the user of the mobile unit, said addressing modes including IP address, intercom number, name, and extension number.

3. A network wherein said gateway is a H.323 gateway located in the same housing as an access point and directly connected to the public switched telephone network.

4. A network wherein said gateway is capable of handling multiple channels of communications simultaneously, and includes a protocol converter for converting the messages received from the access points into a format suitable for communication over a wide messages network and vice versa.

5. A network wherein said gateway includes an analog modem for transmitting and receiving digital data from an access point and converting it into a form suitable for transmission over the public switched telephone network.

6. A network further comprising a communications controller having a plurality of communications ports, with each access point in a set of access points being connected by wire to a predetermined port of said communications controller so that messages received by said controller destined for a particular mobile unit are transferred to the corresponding port of the communications control-

7. A network wherein each of the mobile units use frequency hopping spread spectrum radio frequency communications.
8. A telecommunications network comprising a wireless local area network including a plurality of stationary access points connected in a wired network and a plurality of mobile units, each mobile unit being capable of communicating with an access point at a predetermined range therefrom in the form of data packets including a destination network address and a circuit switched network.
9. A wireless desk telephone capable of communicating with a stationary base station located on a wired communications network comprising a portable housing including a keypad; a handset including a microphone and a speaker; a cable connecting said housing and said handset; a codec in said housing for converting audio digital signals into packetized digital signals; a keypad processor in said housing for processing data entered on said keypad by the user into a destination network address to be used with said packetized digital signals; a protocol stack processor in said housing for assembling a frame including said network address and said digital signals to be transferred over a radio communication link; and
10. A telecommunications base station and mobile unit for use in a wireless local area network comprising in combination:
- a radio transceiver for communicating frames including said packetized digital signals to and from a stationary base station.
11. A method for handling an outgoing call in a network from a handset in a wireless communications local area network, comprising the steps of:
- detecting when the user activates the mobile handset to make an outgoing call;
- receiving in the mobile handset the identification of the destination of the outgoing call from the user;
- transmitting a ring signal to a network station corresponding to said destination, said ring signal designed to alert the recipient that a call is attempting to connect; and
- transmitting an acknowledgment signal to the mobile handset said acknowledgment signal designed to alert the user that the call made by the user is attempting to connect.
12. A method further comprising the steps of receiving in the handset an indication from the user of the type of call the user desires to make.
13. A method further comprising the steps of deleting

mining in the handset whether the user is making a network address call, an intercom call, or a name call.

14. A method further comprising the steps of receiving in the handset an audio signal and converting such signal into a sequence of IP data packets and transmitting said IP data packets by radio communications to a base station.

15. A method wherein such radio communications is in the 2.4 GHz ISM band using spread spectrum radio communications.

16. A method further comprising the steps of opening an H323 session through the base station between the headset and the destination station.

17. A method further comprising the steps of opening a voice channel via a H.323 gateway between an analog voice channel and the mobile handset.

18. A method further comprising the steps of sending a message from the base station to the mobile handset that association with the base station has been made.

19. A method further comprising the steps of sending a message from the destination station to the mobile handset of the call is declined by the destination station.

20. A method wherein the transmitting step is performed by wireless communications to a base station, then by circuit switched wired communications to a destination node, and then by wireless communications to a destination wireless handset.

21. A method further comprising the steps of receiving in the destination handset a sequence of IP data packets, and converting such packets into an analog voice signal.

22. A method further comprising the steps of receiving in the destination handset a sequence of IP data packets and converting such packets into text for storage and display by the handset.

23. A method further comprising the step of producing a ringing sound in the earpiece of a destination wireless handset to indicate that a call is attempting to go through.

24. A method further comprising the step of producing a call waiting indication in the destination wireless handset to indicate that a call is attempting to go through when the wireless handset is in use.

25. A method of handling an incoming call in a wireless local area network including mobile IP phones comprising the steps of:

receiving an incoming ring message which includes the IP address of a calling mobile IP phone;

displaying the IP address of the calling phone on a display on the called mobile IP phone;

determining whether the destination user of the called mobile IP phone accepts or declines the incoming call;

returning a call declined message to the calling mobile IP phone if the destination user declines the incoming call; and

opening an H.323 session between the calling mobile IP phone and the called mobile IP phone if the destination user accepts the incoming call.

26. A method of operating a data communications network including a plurality of sets of stationary access points and a gateway connected to the access points, and a plurality of remote mobile units, the mobile units being capable of wirelessly communicating with at least two of the access points when located within a predetermined range therefrom and being normally associated with and in communications with a single one of such access points, each mobile unit having a single network address that is selectable from a set of network addresses and is utilized by the mobile unit only while such mobile unit is active, comprising the steps of:

(a) storing a set of IP addresses available for use by users in a server computer on the network;

(b) providing identification information of the user to said first mobile unit;

(c) validating the user privileges in said first mobile unit;

(d) assigning an IP address from the set of IP addresses available for use by said first mobile unit; and

(e) transmitting the assigned IP address associated with the user and with said first mobile unit to the telephony gateway.

27. A method wherein the mobile unit communi-

frequency communications.

3. A telecommunications network comprising a wireless local area network including a plurality of stationary access points connected in a wired network and a plurality of mobile units, each mobile unit being capable of communicating with an access point at a predetermined range therefrom in the form of data packets including a destination network address and a circuit switched network;

a mobile unit for providing voice communications on the subnetwork for a user, including a microphone, a speaker, a keypad, a display and an RF transceiver for frequency-hopping spread spectrum communications; and

a combined gateway access point including an RF transceiver for communicating with mobile units at a range therefrom, and a processor for converting the network addressed packetized voice or data signal from the mobile unit to an analog signal for transmission over the circuit-switched network, and for transmitting such voice or data signal to the selected destination station on the telecommunications network.

4. A wireless desk telephone capable of communicating with a stationary base station located on a wired communications network comprising

a portable housing including a keypad;

a handset including a microphone and a speaker;

a cable connecting said housing and said handset;

a codec in said housing for converting audio signals from said microphone into packetized digital signals;

a keypad processor in said housing for processing data entered on said keypad by the user into a destination network address to be used with said packetized digital signals;

a protocol stack processor in said housing for assembling a frame including said network address and said digital signals to be transferred over a radio communication link; and

a radio transceiver for communicating frames including said packetized digital signals to and from a stationary base station.

5. A telecommunications base station and mobile unit

for use in a wireless local area network comprising in combination:

a battery operated mobile unit for acquiring and storing data;

a base station including;

(a) cradle adapted to receive and secure the mobile unit when not in use,

(b) a radio transceiver for transmitting and receiving signals from mobile units;

(c) a processor for downloading data received from the mobile unit when it is placed in the cradle;

(d) an interface between the base station and the public switched telephone network for transferring downloaded data to a selected destination; and

(e) a battery re-charger for recharging the battery of the mobile unit handset when it is placed in the cradle.

6. A method for handling an outgoing call in a network from a handset in a wireless communications local area network, comprising the steps of;

detecting when the user activates the mobile handset to make an outgoing call;

receiving in the mobile handset the identification of the destination of the outgoing call from the user;

transmitting a ring signal to a network station corresponding to said destination, said ring signal designed to alert the recipient that a call is attempting to connect; and

transmitting an acknowledgment signal to the mobile handset, said acknowledgement signal designed to alert the user that the call made by the user is attempting to connect.

7. A method as defined in any of the preceding claims further comprising the steps of receiving in the handset an indication from the user of the type of call the user desires to make,

and/or further preferably comprising the steps of determining in the handset whether the user is making a network address call, an intercom call, or a name call,

and/or further preferably comprising the steps of receiving in the handset an audio signal

and converting such signal into a sequence of IP data packets and transmitting said IP data packets by radio communications to a base station,

munications is in the 2.4 GHz ISM band using spread spectrum radio communications, and/or further preferably comprising the

station, and/or further comprising the steps of opening a voice channel via a H.323 gate-

mobile handset.

A method as defined in any of the preceding claims further comprising the steps of sending a message from the base station to the mobile handset that association with the base station has been made, and/or further preferably comprising the steps of sending a message from the destination to the mobile handset of the call is the destination, and/or wherein preferably the transmitting step is performed by wireless communications to a mobile handset, then by circuit switched wired communications to a destination node, and then by wireless communications to a destination node.

handset, and/or further preferably comprising the

packets into an analog voice signal, and/or further preferably comprising the

sequence of IP data packets and converting such packets into text for storage and display by the

and/or further preferably comprising the step of producing a ringing sound in the earpiece of a destination wireless handset to indicate that a call is

and/or further preferably comprising the step of producing a call waiting indication in the destination wireless handset to indicate that a call is

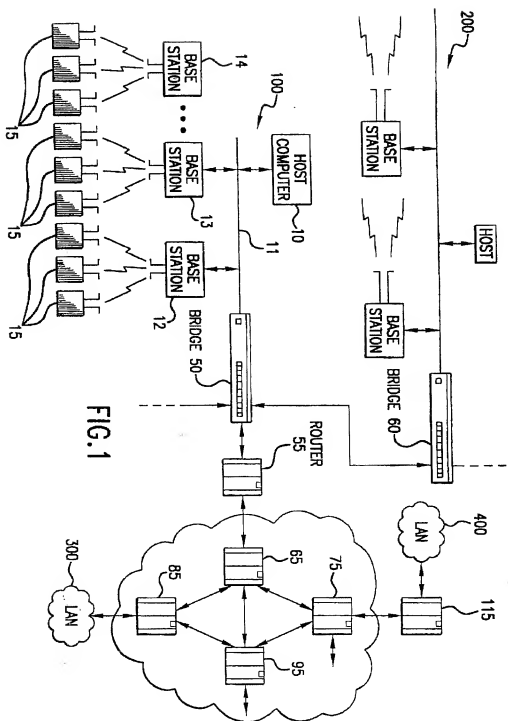
is in use.

receiving an incoming ring message which includes the IP address of a calling mobile phone;

points when located within a predetermined range therefrom and being normally associated with and in communications with a single one of such access points, each mobile unit having a single network address that is selectable from a set of network addresses and is utilized by the mobile unit only while such mobile unit is active, comprising the steps of:

- (a) storing a set of network addresses available for use by users in a server computer on the network;
- (b) transmitting a network address request to the server computer from a first mobile unit;
- (c) assigning a network address from the set of network addresses available to said first mobile unit;
- (d) providing identification information of the user from said first mobile unit to an authentication server;
- (e) validating the user privileges by the authentication server and communicating such validation to said first mobile unit; and
- (f) transmitting the network address associated with the user's mobile unit to the telephony gateway.

13. A method as defined in any of the preceding claims further comprising the step of downloading user-specific operating parameters to the mobile unit from the server computer, and/or further preferably comprising the step of associating the network address associated with the user's mobile unit, transmitted to the telephony gateway with the user identification at said gateway, so that voice communications directed to the user and transmitted to the gateway are translated into packetized voice communications and transmitted to the user at the current network address of the user.
14. A data communications network including a plurality of stationary access points and a plurality of remote mobile units, the mobile units being capable of wirelessly communicating with at least two of the access points when located within a predetermined range therefrom and being normally associated with and in communications with a single one of such access points, a mobile unit having a single network address that is selectable from a set of network addresses and is utilized by the mobile unit only while such mobile unit is active.



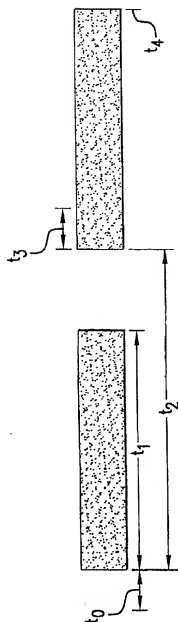


FIG. 2

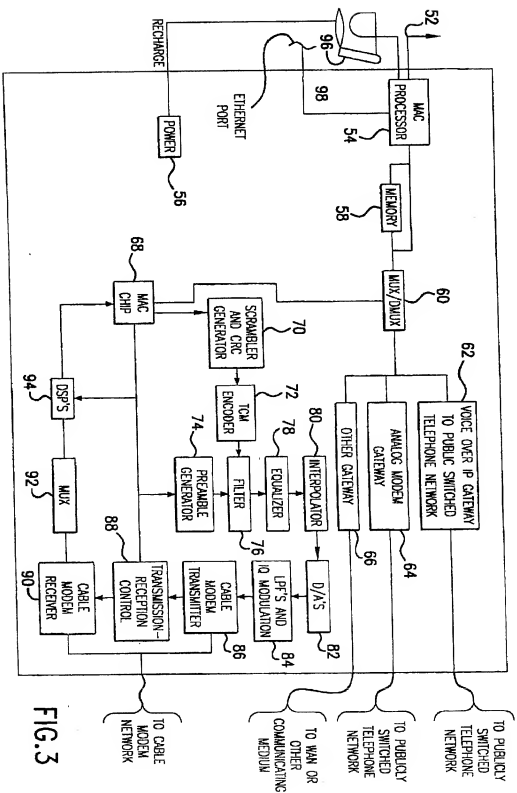


FIG. 3

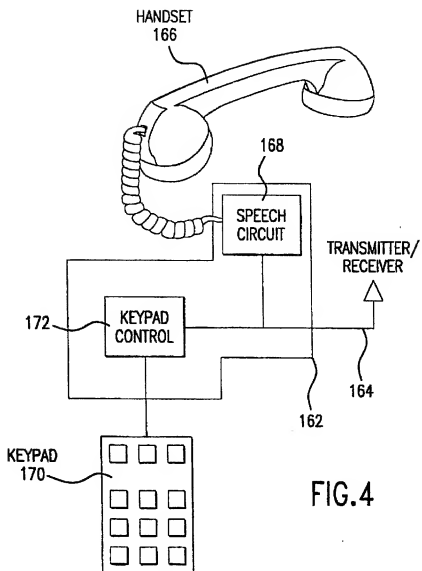
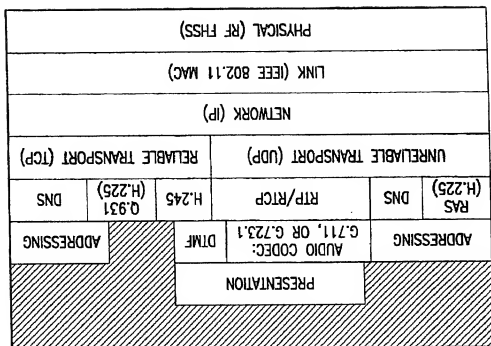


FIG.4

FIG. 5



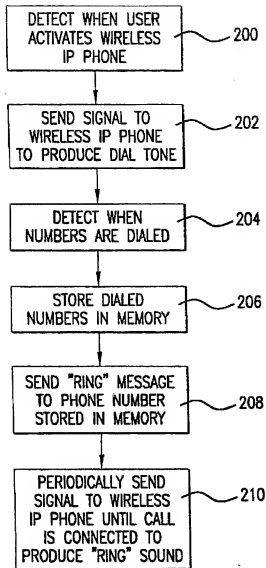


FIG.6

FIG. 7

